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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 03/22/06

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ARTICLES:

- (1) Poll on Koizumi cabinet, political parties, email fiasco, post-Koizumi race, Okinawa base issues

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
March 21, 2006

Questions & Answers

(Figures shown in percentage, rounded off. Parentheses denote the results of a survey conducted Feb. 18-19, unless otherwise specified.)

Q: Do you support the Koizumi cabinet?

Yes	46	(43)
No	38	(41)

Q: Why? (One reason only. Left column for those marking "yes" on previous question, and right for those saying "no.")

The prime minister is Mr. Koizumi	12 (9)	3 (3)
The prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party	7 (7)	3 (3)
From the aspect of policies	15 (14)	23 (26)
Because of the coalition government	4 (4)	4 (5)
No particular reason	7 (7)	4 (3)

Q: Which political party do you support now?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	39	(36)
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto)	13	(14)
New Komeito (NK)	3	(3)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP)	3	(2)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto)	1	(2)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto)	0	(0)
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon)	0	(0)
Liberal League (LL or Jiyu Rengo)	0	(0)
None	36	(38)
No answer (N/A) + don't know (D/K)	5	(5)

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Q: The DPJ's lawmaker, Hisayasu Nagata, offered his apologies for his unconfirmed citing of a fake email in the Diet to grill the LDP, saying former Livedoor Co. President Horie actually didn't email any instructions to send 30 million yen to LDP Secretary General Takebe's son. Do you think Nagata should quit his Diet seat to take responsibility for the fiasco?

Yes	59
No	32

Q: The DPJ will elect its new president in September this year. The DPJ, currently headed by Seiji Maehara, has a number of heavyweights, such as Ichiro Ozawa, Naoto Kan, and Yukio Hatoyama. Who do you think is appropriate to serve as DPJ president for the next term?

Seiji Maehara	14
Ichiro Ozawa	20
Naoto Kan	20
Yukio Hatoyama	17
Others	16

Q: Do you think the DPJ is competent enough to take office? (Parentheses denote the results of a previous survey conducted Aug. 15-16, 2005.)

Yes	19	(20)
No	68	(62)

Q: Do you think the nation's economy is now about to improve, worsen, or remains unchanged? (Parentheses denote the results of a survey conducted Nov. 26-27, 2005.)

Improve	30	(31)
Worsen	12	(14)
No change	55	(52)

Q: Do you appreciate the Koizumi cabinet's economic and monetary policies?

Yes 41
No 43

Q: Who do you think is appropriate for post-Koizumi premiership?
Pick only one from among those listed below.

Taro Aso 5
Shinzo Abe 47
Sadakazu Tanigaki 4
Yasuo Fukuda 20
Others 13

Q: Would you like Prime Minister Koizumi's successor to
prioritize improving Japan's ties with China?

Yes 61
No 26

Q: Would you like Japan to maintain its security treaty with the
US?

Yes 74

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No 14

Q: There's a rise of outcries from among the residents of Nago
City in Okinawa Prefecture, Iwakuni City in Yamaguchi Prefecture,
and other base-hosting municipalities against base or troop
relocation over the realignment of US forces in Japan. Do you
think the government should push ahead with such relocation on
its own responsibility, or do you otherwise think the government
should obtain local consent before doing so?

The government should do so on its own responsibility 27
The government should obtain local consent before doing so 63

Q: The Japanese and US governments are now talking about the idea
of moving about 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam in order to
stave off Okinawa's base-hosting burden. However, the US has
asked Japan to pay about 900 billion yen or 75% of the estimated
cost of infrastructure construction in Guam. Is this fiscal
burden convincing to you?

Yes 14
No 78

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted March 18-19 over
the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD)
basis. This RDD formula chooses persons for the survey from among
all eligible voters throughout the nation on a three-stage random-
sampling basis. Valid answers were obtained from 1,849 persons
(52%).

(2) Close-up 2006 - Relocation of Futenma: Government trying to
force the coastal relocation plan by making minor changes to it

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)
March 22, 2006

By Yoso Furumoto, Teruhisa Mitsumori

The government yesterday switched course and accepted adding
minor changes to the current plan to relocate the US military's
Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture to the
coastal portion of Camp Schwab in Nago City. Lying behind this
move is the government's desire to somehow bring Nago City into
consultations on the relocation plan. Nago Mayor Yoshikazu
Shimabukuro late yesterday responded to talks with Defense Agency
(JDA) Director-General Fukushima Nukaga. Talks between the
government and Nago City have barely begun just ahead of the end-
of-March deadline for the final report on the realignment of US
forces in Japan. Yet, both sides are still wide apart, since JDA
is determined to go ahead with the coastal plan just by making
slight changes to it, while Nago City is calling for a drastic

revision of the plan that involves adoption of a reclamation scheme in ocean waters.

Government urges Nago City to respond to talks, indicating compromising stance, obviously out of impatience with the deadline of final report closing near

"We've decided to engage in energetic talks this week and come up with a certain direction. There is need to finalize the issue to coincide with the deadline for the final agreement Japan and the United States will reach by the end of the month." JDA chief

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Nukaga told this to reporters after meeting with Mayor Shimabukuro, indicating he intended to make minor revisions to the current coastal plan so that coordination with Nago City would progress at a faster pace. JDA is against any drastic revision. That is because of the rule of thumb, namely that the Japan-US Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) specified a sea-based facility plan in 1996, nine years ago, but that the plan has never been put into motion to date.

At first, a movable heliport was planned. But following demands for changes from Okinawa Prefecture and local municipalities, the movable heliport plan changed into the one to construct an airport on reclaimed land so that it could be jointly used by the military and civilian sectors. Additionally, an assessment of effects on the environment was a premise for the start of the construction, but no such assessment has ever been conducted due to objections from environment-preservation groups and anti-base activists. Local residents are opposed to the coastal plan partly because under the plan, a runway is likely to be constructed at a site closer to the residential area, but they are strongly anticipating a favorable effect of reclamation work on the economic front. JDA, however, asserts that if the government were again forced to make a broad concession to accept local demands, the relocation of Futenma would never occur.

Nevertheless, the government has decided to comply with minor changes to the relocation plan. The major reason for this policy shift is that in the recent working-level talks between Japan and the US held in early March, US officials showed their reluctance to complete a final agreement without any bright prospect of gaining local consent. The government and the ruling parties are increasingly becoming impatient as the deadline is coming closer. In the Japan-US talks held last fall, a shallow-waters plan was floated by the US, and among Japanese government ministries, the Foreign Ministry endorsed the plan. JDA, however, brushed aside the Foreign Ministry's endorsement and went ahead with the coastal plan. This time again, calls for a shift to a sea-based plan arose from lawmakers who have served as foreign minister and other officials. The ruling parties were under pressure to revise (the current coastal plan).

Agreeing to minor changes in the coastal plan was a necessary means for JDA to block a sea-based plan and keep the coastal plan in place. Yesterday morning, JDA Director-General Nukaga discussed a policy line of adding minor changes with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. After the meeting, Nukaga told reporters, "Changes must be feasible. I have been told that (things) have been entirely left in the hands of Mr. Nukaga." The JDA chief then emphasized that he was given a free hand by the prime minister under the basic policy of keeping the coastal plan itself in place.

Nago City rocked; Inamine-led prefectural government firmly opposed to coastal plan

"That would be a good thing. I figure that local opposition to the coastal plan might have been transmitted to the central government." So said Nago Mayor Shimabukuro after meeting with JDA Director-General Nukaga, indicating to reporters that he appreciated the government's policy of making minor changes (to the coastal plan). In the talks with Nukaga, the mayor said that he stressed that it would be acceptable if changes were within variations of the sea-based plan, and that he would be ready to

accept future talks with the government.

On March 21, the mayor met with Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine before he left for Tokyo, and confirmed that there was no change in opposition to the coastal plan. In Okinawa, the mayor told reporters, "Local citizens would not be convinced of minor changes because such changes have nothing to do with the coastal plan. Minor changes are thus unacceptable." But in Tokyo, the mayor appreciated minor changes. This gap has given a glimpse of Nago City's agony over the relocation of the Futenma airfield.

The reason why Nago City offered the acceptable scope of changes was that with no key industry in the city, "It has to stimulate its economy by co-existing with the base," according to a senior municipal government official. The city also has the hope that the central government would provide it with a package of economic measures in return for the acceptance of the relocation of Futenma airfield.

In contrast, Okinawa Prefecture is adamant about rejecting plans other than the Henoko offshore plan, namely to reclaim land from the sea off Henoko. If it accepted the coastal plan, it would lead to rejecting the position of the Inamine-led prefectural government that has accepted the previous plan as a result of a difficult decision. Although the gubernatorial election is scheduled for October, incumbent Gov. Inamine has not made it clear whether he will run again. But if he turned around to favor the coastal plan, the conservative-led prefectural government could be put in a precarious position.

But if Nago City accepted minor changes to the coastal plan, no doubt Gov. Inamine would be further pressured by the government and ruling parties to make a difficult decision again. Before this, persuading Nago City first seems to be the government's strategy.

(3) Editorial: Efforts needed to obtain public understanding for plan to relocate Marines to Guam

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
March 21, 2006

The Japanese and US governments will resume US force realignment talks tomorrow in a bid to reach a final agreement. From the viewpoint of maintaining and strengthening the alliance relationship, we hope that both sides will fully discuss how to cooperate with each other first and find common ground.

Delivering a speech at the graduation ceremony of the National Defense Academy on March 19, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said: "There are countries that have been engaged in military buildups recently." As Koizumi pointed out, China and North Korea have been expanding their armaments. Under such a situation, the presence of the US military and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) are imperative as a deterrent to any threat to Japan's peace and stability. Everyone must keep in mind that if the importance of Japan-US alliance is reduced, a wrong signal would be sent to other countries and Japan's national interests would eventually be undermined.

Besides the relocation of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, there is another issue of relocating Marines in Okinawa to Guam.

In bilateral talks held earlier, the US asked Japan to foot 75% of the (10 billion dollar or about 1,175 billion yen) bill to relocate the Marines to Guam. The US had initially worked out approximately 8 billion dollars as the transfer cost, but it then added expenditures for off-base infrastructure building, such as docks to be used by the Marine Corps. An official of the US

Defense Department said: "It is Japan that asked us to relocate the Marines. The US takes responsibility for defending Japan, but Japan does not take responsibility for defending the US. Japan's share of the cost for the planned Marine relocation is very low."

A responsible Japanese minister said on March 16 that Japan would not be able to accept the US cost estimate and is considering a plan to adopt a loan system for expenditures to finance constructing housing for American troops and their families.

Japan may be pressed to pay a huge bill in the end. It is unavoidable for the two governments to share some of the cost. On such an occasion, they will be required to explain to their respective people the basis for the cost estimate in a convincing and clear-cut way.

Japan's defense budget is about 1% in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The US has compared it to its 3%, but making such a comparison is simplistic. We do not think the US should take this as a good opportunity for it to impose a fiscal burden on Japan in order to expanding its bases.

Japan should take seriously the United States' irritation for Japan only focusing its interest on reducing US military bases and showing a lack of understanding toward Washington's efforts to serve as a deterrent in the region by placing the valuable lives of its young people at risk. Under the framework of alliance, one nation should protect its ally. It might be necessary, on the occasion of transferring Marines from Okinawa to Guam, for Japan and the US to take another look at their alliance.

In order for Japan and the US to smoothly manage the alliance, the two governments need to do their best to solicit public support for their relocation plans.

(4) Editorial: Strengthened unity among Japan, US, Australia imperative for regional stability

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
March 19, 2006

Foreign Minister Taro Aso, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer held their first ministerial security talks in Sydney, Australia, on March 18.

Historical changes are going on in the Asia-Pacific region, with the rapid economic growth of China and India. Japan and the US, as well as the US and Australia, have established alliances. It is extremely important for the three countries, which share such core values as freedom and democracy, to hold strategic talks for peace and stability in the region.

The focus of discussions in the trilateral strategy dialogue was on China, which has undertaken an arms buildup backed by its

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rapid economic growth. China has increased its defense budget for 2006 by 14.7% over the previous year, recording double-digit growth for the 18th straight year. US financial authorities revealed before the US Congress that China's military budget is actually three times larger than the announced figure. The increases by the Chinese Navy and Air Force of ballistic missiles and weapons present an element of uncertainty in the region.

Japan, the US, and Australia called for China's "constructive engagement" in the Asia-Pacific region. Such a call is quite rational. They also should try to deepen cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India.

The Bush administration's new National Security Strategy called on China to act as "a responsible stakeholder," noting: "We will urge the Chinese government to take a proper strategy for the sake of its people, but we will also make preparations on the assumption of another case." The trilateral strategy dialogue

probably is part of such preparations.

In East Asia, China has proposed forming an East Asian Community composed of ASEAN, Japan, China, and South Korea. Meanwhile, Japan has insisted on the need to establish a more open framework in cooperation with India, Australia, and other countries.

Strengthened cooperation among Japan, the US, and Australia will become more important as a means of preventing turmoil in the process of forming a new framework for East Asia.

In addition to China, a variety of regional or global challenges are facing the three countries. Such challenges include the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran. How to deal with the bleak security situation in Iraq is another key issue. In order to maintain security in the region, it is also vital to work out measures to deal with bird flu and other potential epidemics.

Japan, the US, and Australia upgraded the sub-cabinet-level strategic talks they had held regularly to a ministerial confab. The statement of the trilateral strategic dialogue explained why the talks were raised to higher status: "That is to express our determination to work together to promote peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region with the aim of protecting our strategic benefits."

In order for Japan to protect its strategic benefits shared with the US and Australia, it is important to strengthen and continue its cooperative ties with them. To that end, Japan must properly fulfill its role and responsibility.

(5) Editorial: Australia-Japan-US Strategic Dialogue - Coalition of the willing needed

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
March 19, 2006

The Australia-Japan-US Strategic Dialogue was held in Sydney among the Japanese, US, and Australian foreign ministers. Prior to that, a Japan-US strategic dialogue between the Japanese and US foreign ministers also took place. This is the first strategic dialogue among the foreign ministers of the three countries. The bilateral strategic dialogue with the US was Japan's second, following the one held last May.

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Japan and Australia each has an alliance with the US. The three countries share basic values, such as freedom and democracy. They have a close cooperative relationship on the security front, as well.

It is significant that the foreign ministers of the three countries have committed to partnership and solidarity not only for immediate issues but also for mid- to long-term strategic challenges. The words "strategic dialogue" carry a significant meaning.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George Bush during their first summit in 2001 decided to hold a bilateral strategic dialogue. Sub-cabinet-level meetings had been held on a regular basis since 2002. It was decided last year that the dialogue would be held under a dual-track structure involving the foreign-ministerial level and high working level. The Australia-Japan-US strategic dialogue is an extension of that process, and it was decided to hold the first meeting this year.

The trilateral strategic dialogue this time covered a wide range of topics. However, discussions appeared to have focused on such issues as the situation in Iraq, the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, and a strategy to deal with China, which is markedly developing both in economic and military terms.

The Bush administration on March 16 issued a new National Security Strategy after a hiatus of three and a half years. Regarding the situation in East Asia, the report noted the perception of the current situations in Japan, Australia, South

Korea, Southeast Asia, and China and how to deal with such situations, and indicated the significance of Japan and Australia as its allies.

The report expressed wariness and devoted the greatest amount of space to China's continuing opaque military expansion. It also urged China to democratize. The statement on China was concluded with the suggestive expression: "Our strategy seeks to encourage China to make the right strategic choices for its people, while we hedge against other possibilities."

During the trilateral strategic dialogue, the three nations likely aimed to deepen their ties as a "coalition of the willing" based on the positions of Japan and Australia, as well as the US security strategy.

On the economic front, the three nations have a competitive relationship in many spheres, but they also share interests in terms of urging various countries, starting with China, to adopt a fair economic system.

In order for the three nations, which share values as maritime states as well, to make their strategic dialogue fruitful, it will become necessary to hold a comprehensive strategic dialogue that covers not only foreign affairs but also defense and fiscal matters.

(6) Post-Koizumi contenders; Research on Shinzo Abe; Grandfather's belief, father's trust (Part 2)

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
March 21, 2006

In 1960, demonstrators opposing the revisions to the Japan-US

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Security Treaty besieged the residence of then Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi at Nanpeidai, Tokyo every day. Shinzo Abe, who was then a pre-school toddler, along with his elder brother Hironobu Abe, squirted the demonstrators with water pistols from the second floor of his friend's house on the opposite side of the street. He seemed to have been familiar with politics even as a child.

Avoided taking any noticeable behavior

Hironobu said that Shinzo inherited the sure convictions of his grandfather, who followed his own path, despite the criticism he faced, in the belief that it was the right thing to revise the Treaty. He added, "Shinzo has been stubborn from his childhood." He never gave up, even when he got into a scuffle with Hironobu's friends.

In the meantime, he avoided taking any noticeable behavior for fear of being regarded as a wellborn boy. He received his education at combined elementary, junior high and high schools and a university at Seikei Gakuen. He was reportedly quiet and not active in student activities.

At the university, he joined the archery club and practiced hard, but he was never a good archer. He did not apply himself to his studies, either. He was fond of reading novels by Shusaku Endo. He often listened to Carol King's songs.

After studying in the US for two years, Abe entered Kobe Steel, following the advice of a secretary to his father, who thought that it would be helpful for his father, because the company's plant is located in his constituency.

Turning point comes four years after entering Kobe Steel

At Kobe steel, when Shinji Yano, then director of the division to which Abe was assigned, ordered Abe to sell such and such a product, Abe replied, "Yes, sir. I will try to do it." It was later found that the business deal had already been made. Yano reprimanded Abe, "You should not do such a thing." But Abe, in

fact, often challenged business rules, fully prepared to take risks.

The turning point came four years after he entered the company. He received a phone call from his father, who had just come into office as foreign minister. He told his son, "Work as my secretary starting tomorrow." Abe replied, "I handle annual sales

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of 10 billion yen. It is impossible to clean up my business within a day or two."

Worried about the situation, Yano invited Abe for a dinner and persuaded him: "Do not worry. We will take care of your business properly." Abe at last conceded.

He served as a secretary to his father for eight years. His father became the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) secretary general. It looked certain he would become prime minister but regrettably he died of cancer.

Abe started his political career with this feeling in his heart: "I wonder whether my father ever really accomplished his aspirations.

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Abe noted: "From my grandfather I have learned that one should carry through with things which one thinks are correct, and from my father I learned that one should value relationships of trust."

(Corrected copy) US military to disperse flight training missions to 6 mainland bases from Kadena, other bases

ASAHI (Page 2) (Abridged)
March 22, 2006

The Defense Facilities Administration Agency yesterday briefed local government officials on the ongoing intergovernmental consultations between Japan and the United States on the planned realignment of US forces in Japan. In yesterday's briefing, the DFAA told local authorities that the government would make efforts to disperse US military aircraft's flight training missions from Kadena airbase in Okinawa Prefecture and other bases to six mainland bases this fall and afterward and to other mainland bases in the future. The government has set a ceiling to the number of days for bilateral joint training exercises at each, and the US military conducts flight training within the limits of each base's ceiling. However, the DFAA told them that the government would like to remove the current ceiling of flights.

According to the DFAA's account, the government will propose dispersing US fighter jets' training from three US bases at Kadena, Misawa in Aomori Prefecture, and Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture to five Air Self-Defense Force bases at Chitose in Hokkaido, Hyakuri in Ibaraki Prefecture, Komatsu in Ishikawa Prefecture, Tsuiki in Fukuoka Prefecture, and Nyutabaru in Miyazaki Prefecture, and also to Misawa.

The US military will start some flight training missions in the fall of 2006 and then full-fledged training in fiscal 2007. The DFAA also revealed that the Japanese and US governments have agreed to make efforts for the availability of other Self-Defense Forces bases.

SCHIEFFER